
One of the great barriers to doing business in Africa is the poor communication links. However that's all about to change, as several undersea fibre optic cables bring broadband internet to the region. Will Ross reports from Nairobi:

It has certainly been **an ambitious project**, laying a seventeen thousand kilometre **fibre optic cable** under the sea, linking Europe and Asia with East and Southern Africa. In a few weeks there should be fast **broadband internet** in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Mozambique and South Africa. The Tanzanian president, Jakaya Kikwete, gave a live telecast across the region and **trumpeted the event** as **a major breakthrough**.

Jakaya Kikwete

When the whole of Tanzania ..., we be brought into the modern age of communications, e-commerce, e-medicine, e-government, e-everything - that will be the greatest thing in our history.

Here in Kenya there will be **a huge sigh of relief**. I've just been to the fifteenth floor of an office block where a frustrated Benjamin Waithaka works as an animator. He designs 3 D websites that often can't even be opened because of the slow internet and when he creates designs for clients he can't **send them over the net**, he has to battle Nairobi's traffic jams to deliver them by hand.

Benjamin Waithaka

Our frustration is actually an understatement for the traffic is sort of mad. Getting your job to a certain destination may take one hour, two hours but with a fibre optic cable then the whole idea of you going through the traffic, well pretty much is not there.

But you're hoping if you can become more efficient as a business that will create more jobs?

Absolutely yes. More jobs, yeah.

In theory the region could be **on the brink of** an exciting internet revolution. Businesses like call centres could **boom** here. But it all depends how well the service is **rolled out**. What is not clear is when the technology might reach the villages where for many accessing a reliable electricity supply and water are still the main priority.

Will Ross, BBC News, East Africa

Vocabulary and definitions

an ambitious project	a plan which needs a great amount of effort to be achieved or be successful
fibre optic cable	a wire made of very thin glass or plastic fibres through which light can travel to carry information, used especially in telephone, television and computer systems
broadband internet	access to the Web that is very fast and enables many messages or large amounts of information to be sent at the same time between computers or other electronic devices
trumpeted the event	announced or talked proudly about something that is happening
a major breakthrough	an important event which greatly improves the current situation (here, getting a high-speed internet connection)
a huge sigh of relief	a feeling of being suddenly very happy because a difficult situation has ended
send them over the net	use the internet to send them
on the brink of	in a situation where new things are about to begin
boom	grow in number very quickly
rolled out	made available for the first time

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